

Contributions.

HINDRANCES TO HIGHER ATTAINMENTS IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

J. C. CASSEL.

I write upon this topic by request of the editor, and as I am limited to a thousand words, I shall at once go to the core of the subject.

To my mind the main hindrances to higher spiritual attainments are comprehended in the misapprehension of the question of *obtainment*; i. e. people try to *attain* what they must first *obtain*. People try to cultivate and develop something in themselves which is not inherent in their nature but foreign to it, hence cannot be *attained* but must be obtained from Him who alone has it to give. This truth is clearly taught in God's word. John says, "I indeed baptize you with water * * * but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." The baptism of the Spirit by the Master was to be as definite an act as was the baptism of John by water, neither one was attained, but obtained. Jesus himself says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:13, in this passage the Spirit is compared to a gift which our heavenly Father has to give. If the Spirit was inherent in our nature and we capable of developing him, it would be superfluous for God to offer him to us as a gift.

The Spirit then is not a human attainment but a gift from God which must be obtained, or received. There can be no true godly spirituality before the spirit of God is shed abroad in the heart, or before the reception of the Holy Ghost. I am aware that many object to this view and contend that if a man has been regenerated by the spirit of God, or has been born of the Spirit, that the Spirit is then an elementary part of that spiritual being which simply needs growth and development. That there is no occasion for further specific spiritual baptism, it must be admitted that this view seems very reasonable to the human mind, but it is not spiritual, hence not according to God's order.

The physical body of Christ was conceived of the Spirit, so that in his generation and growth he partook of the very nature of the Father himself, and yet it was necessary that he received the specific baptism of the Holy Ghost, which came upon him in the form of a dove, before he entered upon his ministry and his contest with the powers of darkness. The apostles were regenerated and saved before

the day of Pentecost, yet it was necessary for them to tarry for the endowment of the Spirit; the converts of Samaria were regenerated and saved, and yet they afterwards received the specific baptism of the Spirit; the disciples at Ephesus were regenerated, but still there was something more to be obtained, which they received when Paul laid hands upon them. Paul tells the Corinthians that he fed them with milk because they were yet carnal. He calls them brethren and regarded them as disciples of Christ, yet declared that they were not spiritual. I Cor. 3:1-3. Surely if the Son of God who already was a part of the Father, and if the apostles and early disciples of Christ needed and obtained a specific spiritual baptism over and above their spiritual birth, we, his disciples of a later day, need and may obtain the same; and if we do not, we will simply be carnal Christians, such as Paul styled his Corinthian brethren, having envy, and strife, and divisions among us. The Lord knows, this is the condition of things where the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost is repudiated or not understood.

No doubt a mere spiritual birth, together with a moral, honest life, will result in the salvation of the soul from destruction, but God has much more to give to the truly spiritual men than mere salvation. There are abundant rewards and great glory to be conferred upon such as become Christlike—to such as overcome as he overcame, and this is only possible by being endued with the same power that he was endued with, and the apostles and early disciples were endued with. There may be difference in degree but not in kind.

Another hindrance to higher attainments in the spiritual life is a misconception of the nature of true spirituality. Some think it is in plain clothes, some think it is a long face and a grave look, some think it is emotion that finds vent in noise and enthusiasm, some think it is comprehended in the observance of ordinances, some in strict Sabbath observance—not one of these things constitutes spirituality, nor all of them put together, but all of them may be a part of a truly spiritual life. True spirituality means to have the spirit of Christ in the every day affairs of life. It is a much higher attainment to be absolutely truthful than to dress plainly over a prevaricating heart; it is much more spiritual to be perfectly honest than to have a long-faced, grave look with a tricky disposition; it is much more Christ-like to have a little of the deep peace of God than a great deal of shallow noise; it is a much higher attainment to actually live the life of Christ

than to simply express it in symbol by the observance of ordinances.

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to a high spiritual life is a lack of desire to know what it is really is and an unwillingness to make a sufficient sacrifice to obtain it, hence the Spirit is grieved and takes his flight, and the poor soul is left to struggle with its carnal nature.

THE NECESSITY OF SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

MILTON S. BRUMBAUGH.

The necessity of systematic giving is very great in the Brethren church, when we look at the different places where money is so much needed and so few that do open up their hearts and respond to the call we need for the good of the church and for the good of the world, to adopt some method different from what we have, so the burden does not fall on just a part of the members of the church to carry the burden. I do believe that every member of the church would be willing to help if there was some method adopted and then placed in their reach, for I do hope there is not a member in the Brethren church that thinks that they can do their duty that they owe to God, by saying that they are too poor. Let us go to the Bible and look if God said that we were too poor, and then look at ourselves and see if we could not make some sacrifice that we could give a few cents to the Lord. O how great is the necessity of our giving to the Lord when we look at our mission work and see how we could help by a little systematic giving. We need a system of giving so that we can trust in it. If every church in the state of Indiana would resolve to pay only the small sum of ten cents per member each month what a great amount of money we could raise in a year for the mission cause. We should have a fixed time each month to pay in our money and every three months it should be sent to the Mission Treasurer. If we would adopt a system like this, and get it to a solid basis, then our Mission Board could go to work, for then they would have something to work with. Not only should we have such a system as this in mission giving, but in every part of church work where money is needed. We should then do our best to meet our payments, so that there would be no disappointments to the church. O let us look in the future and see what such a system would do, when we could go ahead with each part of church work, with a system of giving that would provide the necessary amount of money. Listen to the cry, some one is calling, send me help, there are sinners over here that need salvation. What will we do, brothers and sisters?